

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **WORKING TOGETHER TO IMPROVE COMMUNITY HEALTH IN PETERSBURG**

(Petersburg, Va.) – Petersburg partners are working together to improve community health in Petersburg. There are many collaborative efforts in the City aimed toward fostering a culture of health. These efforts include a network of partners dedicated to improving community health and the quality of life for Petersburg residents.

“We will continue to develop health initiatives and programs in the City through strong partnerships and effective collaborations. It takes all of us working together to improve the health of our community,” said Petersburg Health Department Director Alton Hart, Jr., MD, MPH.

Key initiatives in the City of Petersburg include the Roadmaps to Health Coaching program. This initiative is funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation County Health Rankings and Roadmaps, and the Wisconsin University Population Health Institute. The program is designed to build capacity for a community team to work towards building a culture of health in the community.

The Petersburg Wellness Consortium was selected to form a community team which included representatives from The Cameron Foundation, the City of Petersburg, the Petersburg YMCA, Petersburg Health Department/Crater Health District, Virginia State University Cooperative Extension, Virginia Commonwealth University, and a Petersburg community member. Other initiatives include Crater Health District’s Closing the Gap grant project which focuses on community approaches to prevent diabetes, heart disease and stroke.

The Cameron Foundation’s Healthy Communities Workshop is an opportunity for local partners to learn and create strategies to address the social determinants of health. These are the community factors outside of traditional healthcare that cross-sector collaborators are able to address to improve community health. Examples of social determinants include food access, safe and affordable housing, educational attainment, income, as well as improved work and neighborhood environments.

“The Cameron Foundation is engaged in strategic partnerships in several local communities to address health challenges by looking more broadly at some of the social determinants of health. In addition to participating in this partnership with the City of Petersburg and the Petersburg Wellness Consortium, we are providing technical support in Sussex, Hopewell, and Prince George so that local governments, civic leaders, and businesses can develop and implement tailored strategies that will result in better health outcomes for their communities,” shared The Cameron Foundation President J. Todd Graham.

The City of Petersburg continues its efforts to help make fresh produce available to all of its citizens through the Petersburg Farmer’s Market. The City of is also pursuing several community development activities which will assist in improving the vitality and quality of life in Petersburg. “The health of our residents is a priority for the City. We look forward to working with the Petersburg Wellness Consortium, and other partners

throughout the community, in order to improve the health of our residents,” shared City of Petersburg Interim City Manager Dironna Moore Belton.

In addition to these partners, there are many other agencies and organizations working to improve health in Petersburg. Improving community health involves addressing the many social and neighborhood conditions that contribute to health. This requires a consistent collaborative approach. This is emphasized by the County Health Rankings released annually in March. Communities can use the Rankings as a call to action, and a means of prioritizing their efforts. Community health improvement can take time but is achievable through strong partnerships and collaborative use of resources.

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